



What Seashells Do You See by the Seashore?

Seashells come from different animals in the water. See if you can identify some shells at the beach using these identification cards!

CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



Common Name: Eastern Oyster

Size: 3 to 8 inches (7 to 20 cm) long

Lifespan: up to 20 years

Special Features: Top shell is flat; bottom shell is cupped with a purple mark on the inside

Commonly found: Middle and lower Chesapeake Bay and rivers (but can be found along both East and Gulf Coasts)

Fun Fact: An adult oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water in one day.

Scientific Name:

Crassostrea virginica

CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



Common Name: Ark

Size: 1 to 2.5 inches (2.5 to 6 cm) long

Lifespan: up to 5 years

Special Features: Thick, white, boxy shells

Commonly found: Sediments of the salty waters of the lower Chesapeake Bay

Fun Fact: Arks use a heavy "foot" to anchor them in the sediments.

Scientific Name (Family):

Arcoidea

CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



Common Name: Barnacle

Size: less than 0.5 to 1 inch (1.25 to 2.5 cm) in diameter

Lifespan: 5 to 10 years

Special Features: Six overlapping gray or white shell plates; flat base with an opening at the top

Commonly found: Rocks, reefs, jetties, pilings, boat hulls, and other hard surfaces throughout the Chesapeake Bay

Scientific Name (Order):

Sessilia



CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



Robert Aquino, SEPC

Common Name: Atlantic Oyster Drill

Size: 1 inch (2.5 cm) long

Lifespan: up to 10 years

Special Features: Five to six raised whorls, brown vertical ribs, and a thin, flared lip

Commonly found: Oyster reefs, rock pilings in the middle to lower Chesapeake Bay

Fun Fact: Oyster drills use a special enzyme to soften oyster shells before drilling a hole into the shell.

Scientific Name:

Urosalpinx cinerea

CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



Wynne Longbottom, MD Biodiversity Project

Common Name: Atlantic Ribbed Mussel

Size: 2 to 4 inches (5 to 10 cm) long

Lifespan: 15 years or longer

Special Features: Thin, slightly curved shell with multiple ribs

Commonly found: Marshes and mud flats in the middle and lower Chesapeake Bay

Fun Fact: A ribbed mussel's age can be determined by counting the ribs on its shell.

Scientific Name:

Geukensia demissa

CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



MD DNR

Common Name: Bay Scallop

Size: 3 inches (7.5 cm) in diameter

Lifespan: up to 2 years

Special Features: Rounded, ribbed shells with a pair of points at the shell's hinge

Commonly found: Shallow waters of the lower Chesapeake Bay

Fun Fact: Scallops move by rapidly clapping their shells together, instead of using a foot like other bivalves.

Scientific Name:

Argopecten irradians



CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



BRUCE OWEN

Common Name: Eastern Elliptio

Size: around 5 inches (13 cm) in length

Lifespan: up to 100 years

Special Features: Typically oval or trapezoidal with a brown or dark green shell

Commonly found: Freshwater streams and lakes

Fun Fact: The Eastern elliptio is highly variable in its appearance leading some scientists to believe that they may be many different species that look similar

Scientific Name:

Elliptio complanata

CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



NOVA FISHBONE

Common Name: Hard Clam

Size: 4 inches (10 cm) or longer

Lifespan: up to 40 years

Special Features: Thick, ridged, rounded shells

Commonly found: From the shoreline to as deep as 60 feet; generally found in the lower Chesapeake Bay.

Fun Fact: The hard clam is also known as a quahog, little neck, cherrystone, and chowder clam.

Scientific Name:

Mercenaria mercenaria

CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



BILL HANCOCK AND BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

Common Name: Hooked Mussel

Size: 1 to 2 inches (2.5 to 5 cm) long

Lifespan: 80 years or more

Special Features: Shell has distinct ridges and curves with a strongly "hooked" front end

Commonly found: Attached to shells, rocks, or other hard surfaces throughout the Chesapeake Bay

Scientific Name:

Ischadium recurvum

Fun Fact: The presence of mussels in an oyster reef can more than double the overall filtering capacity of that reef.



CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



Common Name: Knobbed Whelk

Size: 5 to 9 inches (13 to 23 cm) long

Lifespan: 28 years or more

Special Features: Spiraled shell with low spines on the shoulder; shell opens on right side

Commonly found: Shallow waters all along the Atlantic Coast

Fun Fact: Knobbed whelks have been in existence for more than 30 million years.

Scientific Name:

Busycon carica

CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



Common Name: Macoma Clams

Size: up to 1.5 inches (4 cm) long

Lifespan: up to 8 years

Special Features: Thin, fragile, chalky white shells

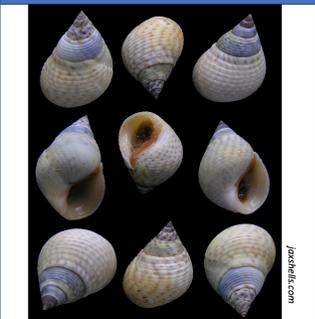
Commonly found: Burrows in sand and mud along shoreline in middle and lower Chesapeake Bay

Fun Fact: Macoma clams are some of the most abundant clams in the Chesapeake Bay

Scientific Name:

Macoma spp.

CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



Common Name: Marsh Periwinkle

Size: 1 inch (2.5 cm) long

Lifespan: about 5 years

Special Features: Spiraled, grooved shell with slightly pointed spire

Commonly found: Tidal marshes in the middle and lower Chesapeake Bay

Fun Fact: The marsh periwinkle “farms” fungus by chewing holes in grass and spreading waste across the cuts.

Scientific Name:

Littorina irrorata



CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



Common Name: Soft Shell Clam
Size: 3 to 4 inches (8 to 10 cm) long
Lifespan: up to 12 years
Special Features: Thin, oval, elongated shells
Commonly found: Soft sediments throughout the Chesapeake Bay
Fun Fact: Adult soft shell clams can only move vertically and cannot rebury themselves if they are removed from their burrow.

Scientific Name:

Mya arenaria

CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



Common Name: Zebra Mussel
Size: Less than 1 inch (2.5 cm) long
Lifespan: up to 15 years
Special Features: D-shaped shell with dark and light stripes
Commonly found: Still or slow-moving lakes, rivers, streams, and reservoirs in the upper Chesapeake Bay. Native to Eurasia.
Fun Fact: The zebra mussel is an invasive species that was introduced into the Great Lakes region in the mid-1980s and have spread rapidly throughout the United States.

Scientific Name:

Dreissena polymorpha

**INVASIVE
SPECIES**

CHESAPEAKE BAY IDENTIFICATION CARD



Common Name: Veined Rapa Whelk
Size: 6 to 7 inches (15 to 18 cm) long
Lifespan: 10 years or longer
Special Features: Heavy, rounded, boxy shell with a short spike and a large whorl
Commonly found: Sandy areas in the lower Chesapeake Bay
Fun Fact: Rapa whelks were first discovered in the Chesapeake Bay in 1998, likely brought to the Bay via ship's ballast water.

Scientific Name:

Rapana venosa

**INVASIVE
SPECIES**

